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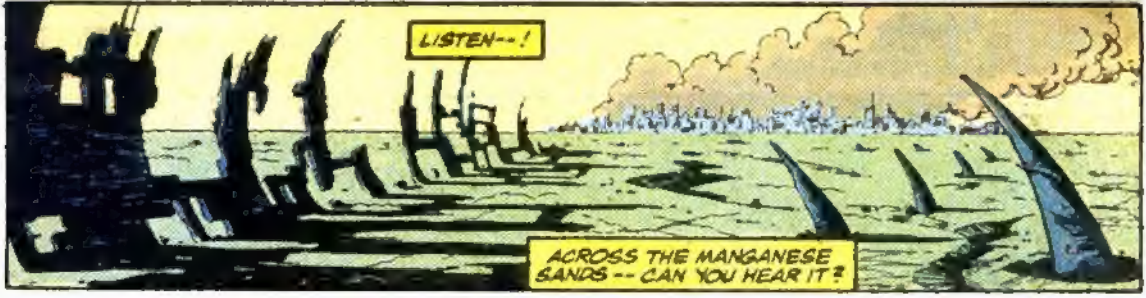

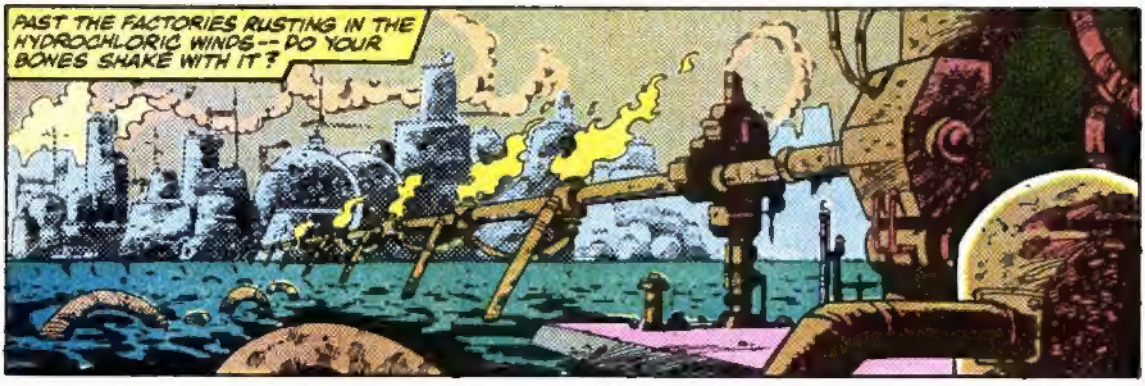

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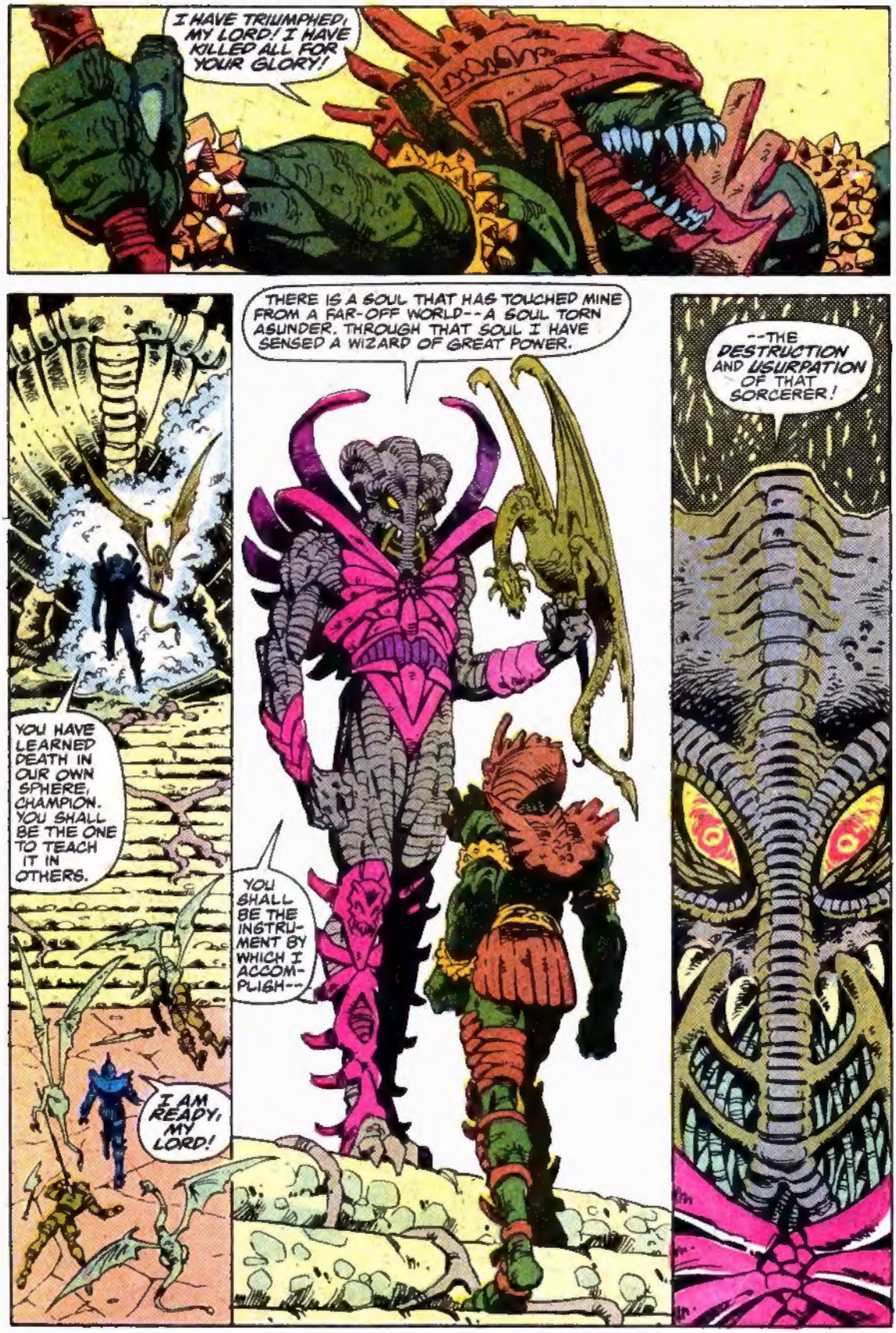
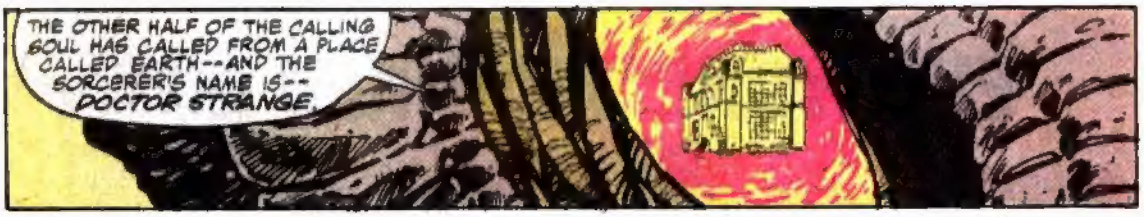
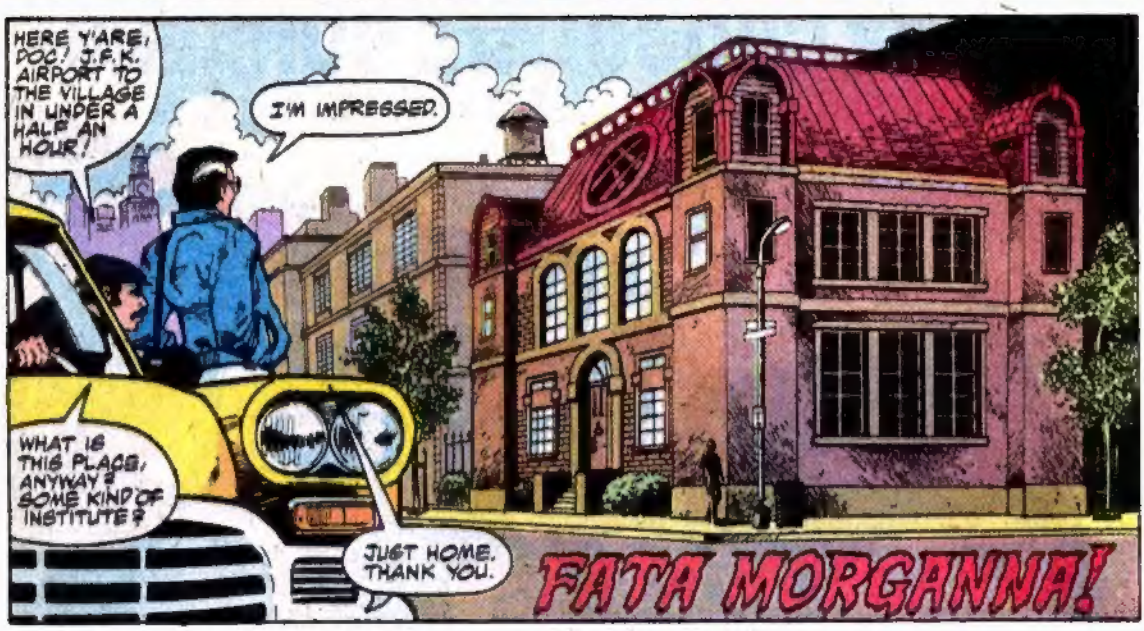
IN THE HIGH ARENA DEATH CHITTERS AND CRASHES AND SMELLS LIKE AMMONIA-- IT ECHOES WITH THE GURGLE AND THE BUZZ OF THE DYING.
THE STARS THAT SHINE IN THESE SKIES HAVE NOT YET HAD THEIR LIGHT REACH OUR NIGHT EYES-- AND YET THE SOUND OF DEATH-- AND VICTORY-- ARE VERY SIMILAR.


I HAVE TRIUMPHED, MY LORD! I HAVE KILLED ALL FOR YOUR GLORY!
THERE IS A SOUL THAT HAS TOUCHED MINE FROM A FAR-OFF WORLD--A SOUL TORN ASUNDER. THROUGH THAT SOUL I HAVE SENSED A WIZARD OF GREAT POWER.
--THE DESTRUCTION AND USURPATION OF THAT SORCERER!
YOU HAVE LEARNED DEATH IN OUR OWN SPHERE, CHAMPION. YOU SHALL BE THE ONE TO TEACH IT IN OTHERS.
YOU SHALL BE THE INSTRUMENT BY WHICH I ACCOMPLISH--
I AM READY, MY LORD!

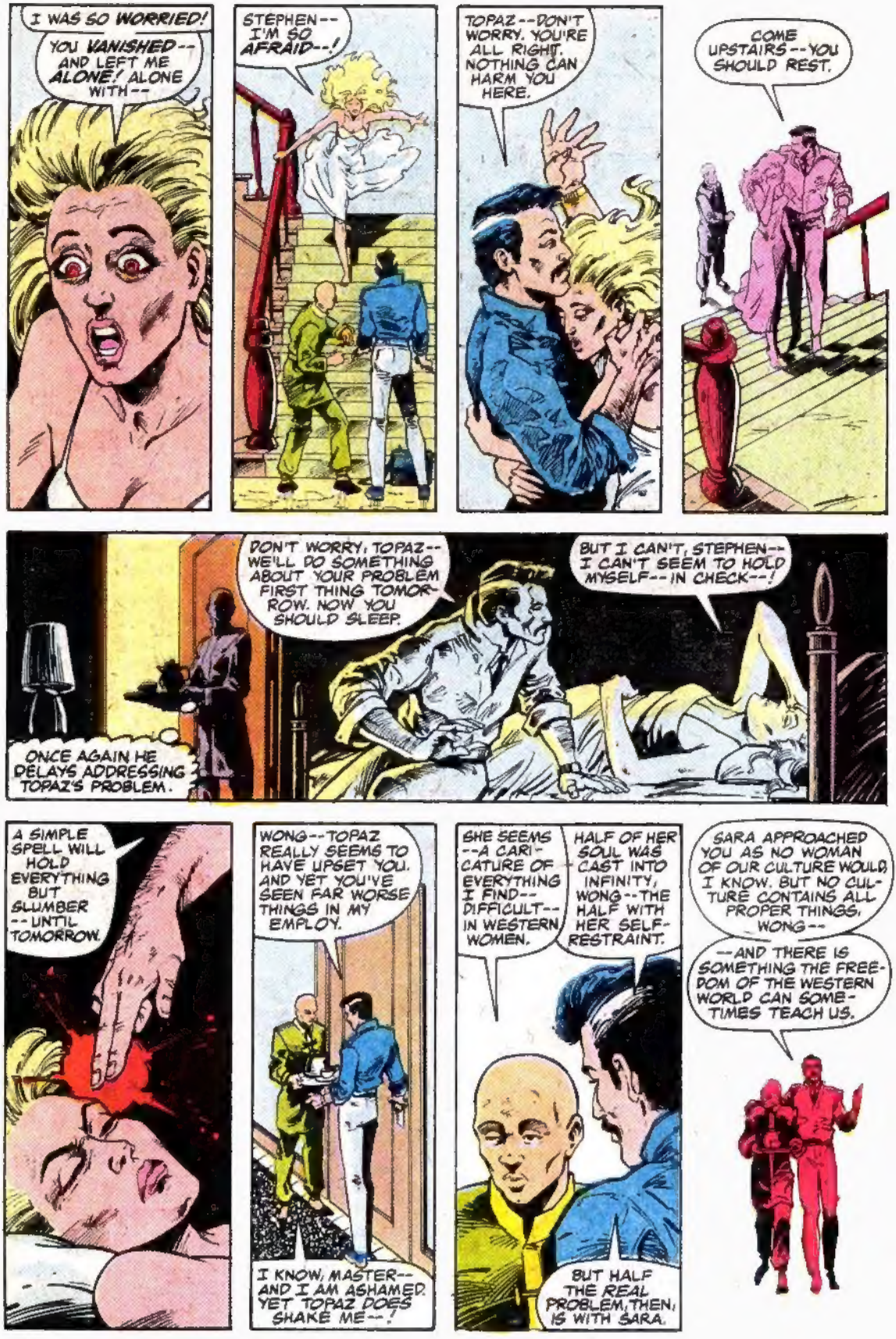



HERE Y'ARE, DOC! J.F.K. AIRPORT TO THE VILLAGE IN UNDER A HALF AN HOUR!
I'M IMPRESSED.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE, ANYWAY? SOME KIND OF INSTITUTE?
JUST HOME, THANK YOU.
FATA MORGANNA!

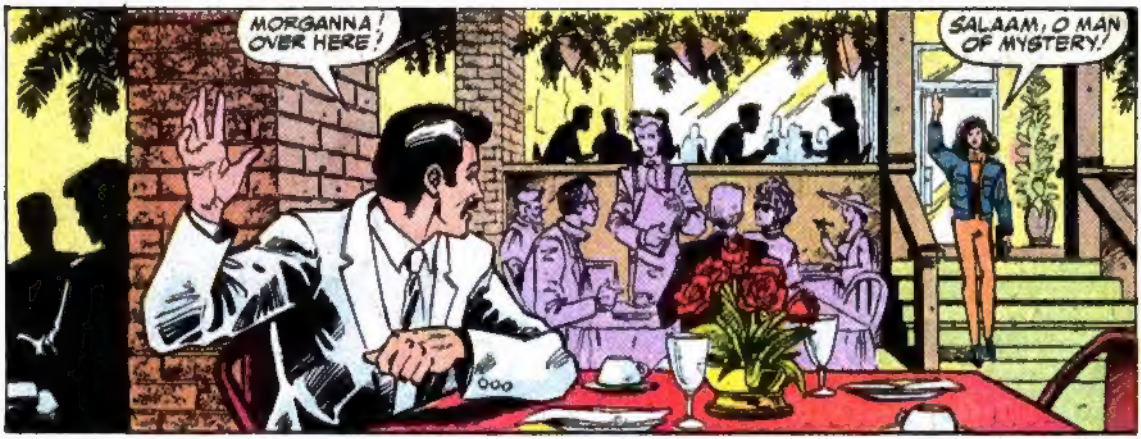
MASTER! THANK GOOD-NESS--
I'M SORRY, WONG--I DIDN'T MEAN TO DESERT YOU AND REAPPEAR IN MARSEILLES, BUT THERE WAS MUCH THAT NEEDED DOING THERE.

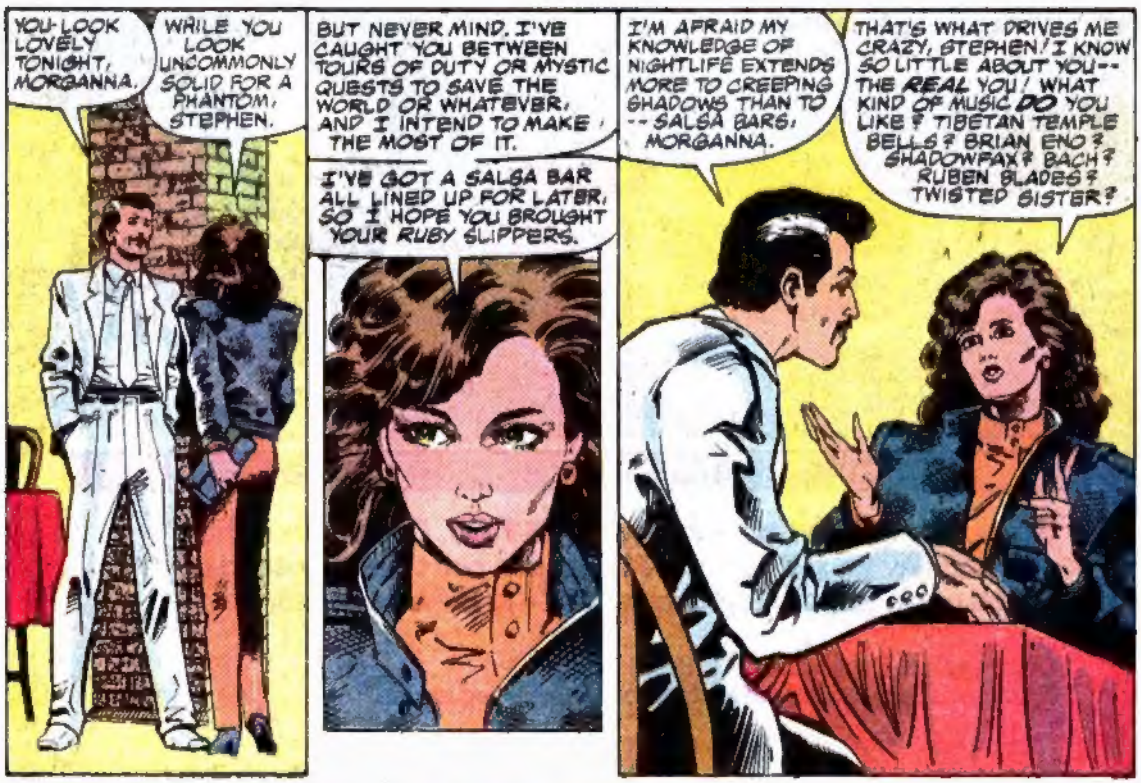
BUT--WHAT'S WRONG? SHOULD I HAVE COME BACK BY MYSTIC MEANS INSTEAD OF BY PLANE? HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?
NO, MASTER--IT'S MERELY--TOPAZ--!

PETER B. gillis STORY	CHRIS warner ART	RANDY emberlin INKS	JIM novak LETTERER	BOB sharen COLORS	CARL potts EDITOR	JIM shooter EDITOR IN CHIEF

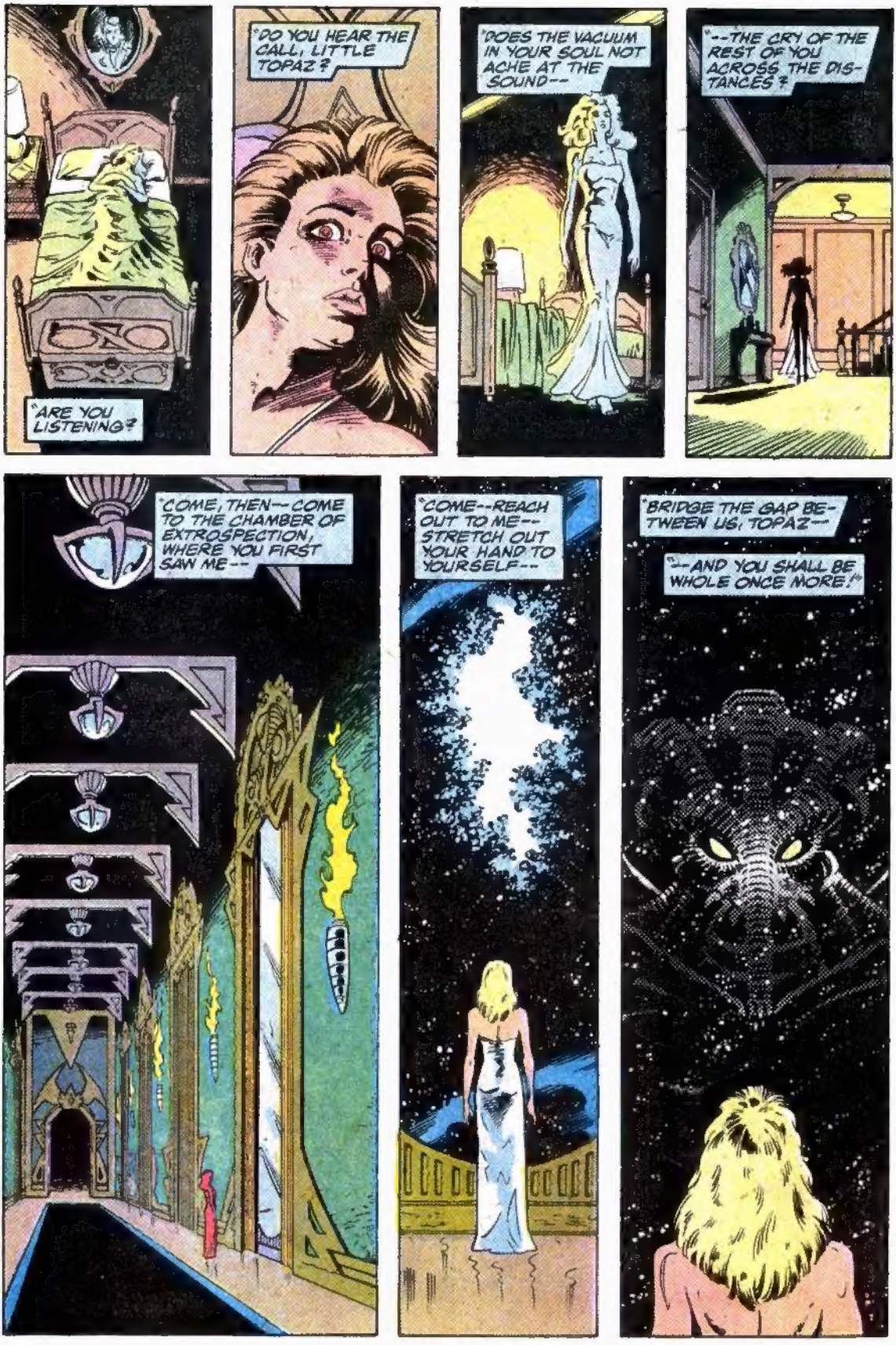

I WAS SO WORRIED!
YOU VANISHED--AND LEFT ME ALONE! ALONE WITH--
STEPHEN--I'M SO AFRAID--!
TOPAZ--DON'T WORRY. YOU'RE ALL RIGHT. NOTHING CAN HARM YOU HERE.
COME UPSTAIRS--YOU SHOULD REST.
DON'T WORRY, TOPAZ--WE'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM FIRST THING TOMORROW. NOW YOU SHOULD SLEEP.
BUT I CAN'T, STEPHEN--I CAN'T SEEM TO HOLD MYSELF--IN CHECK--!
ONCE AGAIN HE DELAYS ADDRESSING TOPAZ'S PROBLEM.
A SIMPLE SPELL WILL HOLD EVERYTHING BUT SLUMBER--UNTIL TOMORROW.
WONG--TOPAZ REALLY SEEMS TO HAVE UPSET YOU. AND YET YOU'VE SEEN FAR WORSE THINGS IN MY EMPLOY.
I KNOW, MASTER--AND I AM ASHAMED. YET TOPAZ DOES SHAKE ME--!
SHE SEEMS--A CARICATURE OF EVERYTHING I FIND--DIFFICULT--IN WESTERN WOMEN.
HALF OF HER SOUL WAS CAST INTO INFINITY, WONG--THE HALF WITH HER SELF-RESTRAINT.
BUT HALF THE REAL PROBLEM, THEN, IS WITH SARA.
SARA APPROACHED YOU AS NO WOMAN OF OUR CULTURE WOULD, I KNOW. BUT NO CULTURE CONTAINS ALL PROPER THINGS, WONG--
--AND THERE IS SOMETHING THE FREEDOM OF THE WESTERN WORLD CAN SOMETIMES TEACH US.

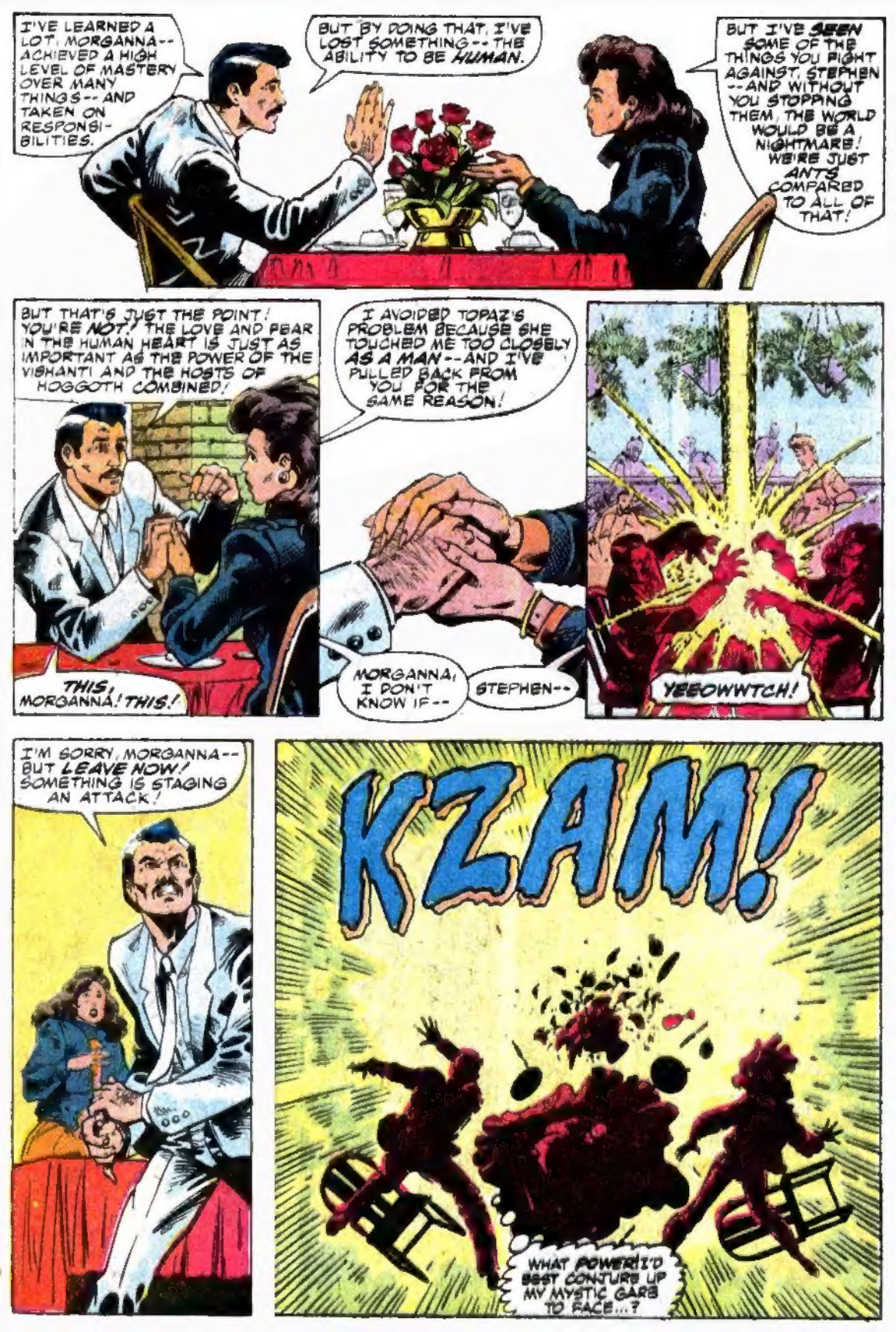
NO, I EXPECT HIM IN FROM THE AIRPORT SOON--YES, MARSEILLES!--YES, I DID REMIND HIM OF YOUR DATE, MS. BLESSING, BUT WELL, IT'S STEPHEN STRANGE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.
FRANKLY, YOU KNOW THE SITUAAAAAY!
PARDON ME, SARA.
HELLO, MORGANNA? YES, IT'S STEPHEN. NO, I'VE STOOD YOU UP AT LEAST TEN TIMES TOO MANY. TONIGHT AT EIGHT?
NO, JET LAG'S NO PROBLEM. I'LL BE OUT FRONT. 'BYE.
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT, YOU TWO! THERE'VE BEEN CLOUDS OF TENSION AROUND ALL OUR HEADS LATELY--AND IT'S TIME ALL OF US, INCLUDING THE MASTER SORCERER, HAD A NIGHT OFF!
FRESH PERSPECTIVES ARE NEEDED FROM TIME TO TIME!
I WANT BOTH OF YOU OUT OF THE HOUSE TONIGHT! DO SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T DONE IN A WHILE!
DOCTOR'S ORDERS!


MORGANNA! OVER HERE!
SALAAM, O MAN OF MYSTERY!


YOU LOOK LOVELY TONIGHT, MORGANNA.
WHILE YOU LOOK UNCOMMONLY SOLID FOR A PHANTOM, STEPHEN.
BUT NEVER MIND. I'VE CAUGHT YOU BETWEEN TOURS OF DUTY OR MYSTIC QUESTS TO SAVE THE WORLD OR WHATEVER, AND I INTEND TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT.
I'VE GOT A SALSA BAR ALL LINED UP FOR LATER, SO I HOPE YOU BROUGHT YOUR RUBY SLIPPERS.
I'M AFRAID MY KNOWLEDGE OF NIGHTLIFE EXTENDS MORE TO CREEPING SHADOWS THAN TO -- SALSA BARS, MORGANNA.
THAT'S WHAT DRIVES ME CRAZY, STEPHEN! I KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT YOU -- THE REAL YOU! WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE? TIBETAN TEMPLE BELLS? BRIAN ENO? SHADOWFAX? BACH? RUBEN BLADES? TWISTED SISTER?

I'M AFRAID I'M OUT OF TOUCH WITH MUSIC, MORGANNA. I'M OUT OF TOUCH --
--WITH SO MANY THINGS.
I'M LISTENING, STEPHEN.


"ARE YOU LISTENING?
"DO YOU HEAR THE CALL, LITTLE TOPAZ?
"DOES THE VACUUM IN YOUR SOUL NOT ACHE AT THE SOUND--
"--THE CRY OF THE REST OF YOU ACROSS THE DISTANCES?
"COME, THEN-- COME TO THE CHAMBER OF EXTROSPECTION, WHERE YOU FIRST SAW ME--
"COME--REACH OUT TO ME-- STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND TO YOURSELF--
"BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN US, TOPAZ--
"--AND YOU SHALL BE WHOLE ONCE MORE!"


I'VE LEARNED A LOT, MORGANNA-- ACHIEVED A HIGH LEVEL OF MASTERY OVER MANY THINGS-- AND TAKEN ON RESPONSIBILITIES.
BUT BY DOING THAT, I'VE LOST SOMETHING-- THE ABILITY TO BE HUMAN.
BUT I'VE SEEN SOME OF THE THINGS YOU FIGHT AGAINST, STEPHEN --AND WITHOUT YOU STOPPING THEM, THE WORLD WOULD BE A NIGHTMARE! WE'RE JUST ANTS COMPARED TO ALL OF THAT!
BUT THAT'S JUST THE POINT! YOU'RE NOT! THE LOVE AND FEAR IN THE HUMAN HEART IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE POWER OF THE VISHANTI AND THE HOSTS OF HOGGOTH COMBINED!
THIS, MORGANNA! THIS!
I AVOIDED TOPAZ'S PROBLEM BECAUSE SHE TOUCHED ME TOO CLOSELY AS A MAN--AND I'VE PULLED BACK FROM YOU FOR THE SAME REASON!
MORGANNA, I DON'T KNOW IF--
STEPHEN--
YEEOWWTCH!
I'M SORRY, MORGANNA-- BUT LEAVE NOW! SOMETHING IS STAGING AN ATTACK!
KZAM!
WHAT POWER! I'D BEST CONTURE UP MY MYSTIC GARB TO FACE...?

DR. STRANGE! DEATH IS HERE!
RUN, MORGANNA! AS FAST AND AS FAR AS YOU CAN!
NO ONE SHALL DIE HERE! FLAMES OF FALTINE WILL DISSOLVE YOUR ARMOR, AND--
MY ARMOR IS PROOF AGAINST ALL SUCH SPELLS--
--AND MY HANDS ARE MAGICIAN'S DEATH!
KRAASH!

I CAN SEE THAT SPELLS ALONE WON'T STOP YOU: I'LL NEED A PHYSICAL INSTRUMENT!
THIS BUTTER KNIFE WILL DO!
ONCE INVESTED WITH THE PROPER POWER, IT WILL BECOME A WEAPON--
--THAT WILL DRIVE YOU BACK TO THE DARKNESS!
TRY IT!
KRAASH!

AND, BLOCKS AWAY, AT THE SANCTUM...
ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T COME WITH ME, WONG? I'M GOING TO THE MOVIE WITH FRIENDS--!
THANK YOU--SARA, BUT I HAVE MADE MY PREPARATIONS FOR THE EVENING. I WILL LEAVE IN A LITTLE WHILE.
WONG--PLEASE--JUST BECAUSE I CAME ON A BIT TOO STRONG TO YOU--I'D RATHER THAT DIDN'T MEAN THAT I LOST A FRIEND, TOO--!
I AM SORRY THAT I AM CAUSING YOU DISTRESS, SARA I SHOULD HAVE KEPT THE FACT OF MY BETROTHAL TO MYSELF. I WAS INSENSITIVE, AND I APOLOGIZE.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, WONG! I--
BLAST.
IT'S LIKE WE'VE TURNED INTO TWO ALIENS! I THOUGHT I KNEW HIM--I DID KNOW HIM! BUT WHAM! DOWN COME THE CULTURAL BARRIERS, AND I'M TALKING TO AN ABSOLUTE WALL!
"REACH, REACH OUT! THE PART OF THE SOUL YOU LOST IS HERE--WITH ME!
"AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS REACH ACROSS THE DISTANCE AND TOUCH ME, LITTLE TOPAZ!
"THE BARRIER BETWEEN US IS GREAT AND DEEP, AND I CANNOT BREAK IT, --BUT YOU CAN!
"YOU CAN HAVE EVERYTHING IF YOU'LL ONLY REACH OUT--
"--REACH OUT AND TAKE MY HAND--!"
RRRRR
WELL I'LL DROWN MY SORROWS IN RICHARD GERE AND--WHAT WAS THAT--?

STEPHEN--SHOULD I CALL THE AVENGERS OR SOMETHING?
JUST GO, MORGANNA--OR HE'LL MAKE ALL OF YOU HIS TARGETS AS WELL!
THEY WILL DIE WHEN YOU DIE, DR. STRANGE!
THOOOOOOOM
THAT LIGHT--THE SANCTUM IS UNDER ATTACK AS WELL!
THEN--THIS ASSAULT IS ONLY A FEINT!
NO FEINT, STRANGE!
MY DEATH IS REAL! WHILE YOU ARE DISTRACTED--
HOLY--THE SANCTUM WHAT IN THE--
--WONG--!

--FEEL IT NOW!
STEPHEN!!!
STEPHEN, HE--HE CAN'T HAVE KILLED YOU!?
HE HAS WEAKENED ME WITH MY BODY WOUNDED SO SEVERELY, ONLY MY ASTRAL FORM CAN REMAIN FUNCTIONAL!
VICTORY IS NOT MINE! HIS SPIRIT HAS DANCED AWAY --ELUDED ME!
HEAR ME, SORCERER! SHOW YOURSELF AND DIE THE UNRETURNING DEATH UNDER ME--
--OR I WILL BEGIN KILLING THESE PEOPLE BY THE HUNDREDS!
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING AGAINST POWER LIKE HIS WITHOUT MY BODY-- WITHOUT A BODY--
--NO! I CAN'T INVOLVE HER! IT COULD KILL HER!
AND YET THAT CREATURE COULD KILL HUNDREDS--!
STEPHEN-- OH, PLEASE, STEPHEN--!

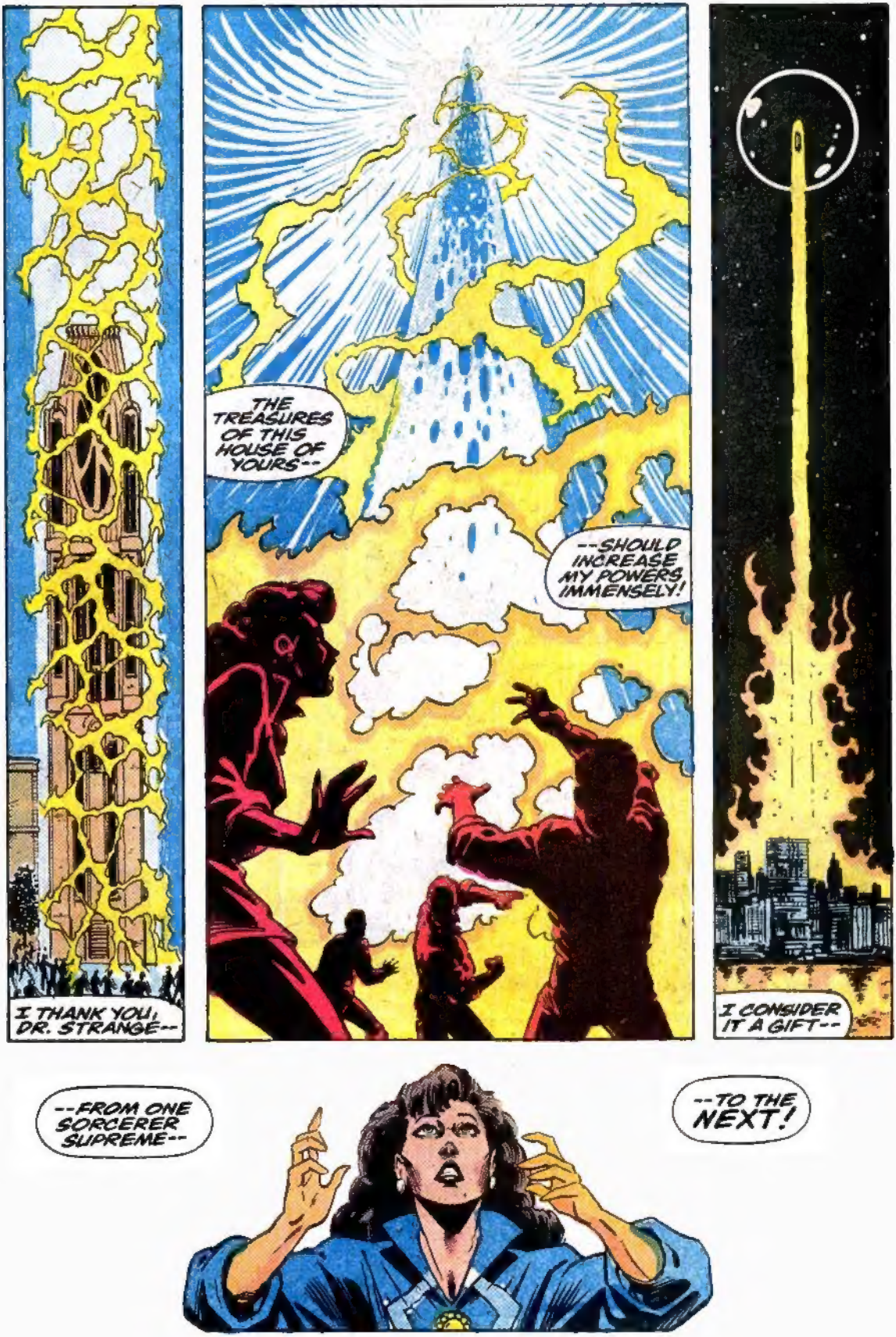
FORGIVE ME, MORGANNA--!
MORGANNA, MY ASTRAL FORM CAN'T WORK THROUGH MY OWN BODY ANY LONGER. FOR THE SAKE OF MANY LIVES, I ASK YOU TO LET ME USE YOURS. IT WILL BE VERY DANGEROUS, AND I WON'T BLAME YOU IF YOU REFUSE.
SPEAK TO ME
I-- WHAT? HUH?
THE LAST THING I INTENDED WAS TO IMPERIL YOU-- BUT YOU ARE THE ONLY HOPE.
I-- I-- OK.
OK--!
NOW TAKE THE AMULET AND PUT IT AT YOUR NECK.
SHOW YOURSELF, DR. STRANGE! I AM YOUR DEATH!
AND A SIMPLE SPELL OF ILLUSION, AND WE ARE READY.
THEN TURN, DEMON--
--FOR DR. STRANGE STANDS READY!

SO NOW LET THE POWER OF THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO STRIKE INTO THE HEART OF THIS EVIL!
NOTHING! YOUR BODY IS TOO IMPURE --YOUR MIND TOO UNCONDITIONED TO OPERATE THE AMULET!
I--I'M SORRY--!
THERE'S NO TIME! WE'LL HAVE TO AUGMENT AN EXISTING SPELL!
CLUTCH THE SWORD TIGHTLY, MORGANNA--
--AND BE STRONG--!
HOLD ON, MORGANNA --HOLD ON--!

YOU HAVE THE STRENGTH, MORGANNA-- YOU WON'T FAIL!
I'M WITH YOU, MORGANNA!
BUT I CAN'T-- I CAN'T FIGHT A DEMON--
--WITH-- WITH A BUTTER KNIFE--!
SO YOU RUN, SORCERER! COWARD!
DEATH IS NOT RUN FROM!
KRUNCH!
NO!!!!
MORGANNA! NO!

YOU HAVE-- INJURED INNOCENTS, MONSTER--
--AND YOU HAVE CAUSED ME-- TO BRING AN INNOCENT INTO PERIL--!
YOU HAVE PUSHED ME-- TOO FAR--!
AND YOU WILL NOW FACE A POWER THAT DOES NOT DEPEND ON ANY MORTAL'S PURITY--!
TAKE HIM, SATANNISH --HE IS YOURS!

HE IS GONE -- BUT IT WAS AN EVIL DEED. I SHOULD NOT HAVE FORCED YOU TO BE A PART OF SUCH BLACK MAGIC, MORGANNA.
BUT-- THE LIGHT --STE-PHEN--
--IT'S COMING FROM THE MAN-SION--!
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOUR BODY! IT'S DYING!
I KNOW--
--BUT THE TRUE-- DANGER IS-- MORGANNA!
NO-- YOU'RE RIGHT-- LET'S GO--!
THE WHOLE THING WAS--A FEINT--!
STEPHEN-- MY HEART--IS IMPORTANT TOO--!
NO! WHAT'S HAPPENING?


I THANK YOU, DR. STRANGE--
THE TREASURES OF THIS HOUSE OF YOURS--
--SHOULD INCREASE MY POWERS IMMENSELY!
I CONSIDER IT A GIFT--
--FROM ONE SORCERER SUPREME--
--TO THE NEXT!

STE--MORGAN-NA? WHAT --WHAT HAPPENED?
THE MANSION --TOPAZ AND-- AND WONG WERE INSIDE!
WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE THAT, MORGANNA? WHERE'S DR. STRANGE? WHAT'S GOING ON?
SARA, I-- UUUHHH...
...CAN'T KEEP IT... HURT TOO...
MORGANNA!
MORGANNA--?
WELL, THAT'S THE LAST OF THE VICTIMS. LOOKS LIKE THE WHOLE THING'S OVER FOR NOW.
GUESS THEY'LL HAVE TO CALL IN A DEMOLITION TEAM FROM THE LOOKS OF THE RESTAURANT.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS ONE, BILL-- I DON'T THINK HE'LL EVEN MAKE IT TO THE HOSPITAL--!
NEXT ISSUE: FOR THE LIFE OF DR. STRANGE!